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By-Price, William F.

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Twenty high school and college students aged 16 to 20 were trained as summer camp counselors in a project to provide experiences leading to choosing a career with the mentally retarded. In the 11-week period, 1 week was devoted to lectures and seminars, 8 weeks to working with the retarded, and 2 weeks to working with multiply handicapped adults. A summary evaluation of each student was made from answers to a questionnaire distributed at the beginning, middle, and end of the program. Of the 20 students, six indicated they would choose special education as a career, five would not choose it, and nine would work as volunteers in local communities although they would probably not choose special education as a career. All 20 participants are described and evaluated. (SN)

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Final Report

Student Work Experience And Training Program

Health, Education and Welfare Grant No.
OEG -0-8-088068-4482(032)

Conducted at

Outdoor Laboratory at Little Grassy Lake
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

Summer -- 1968

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Preface

Southern Illinois University applied for its third successive SWEAT grant from the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, November 17, 1967.

In the Spring of 1968 we received official notification that our request had been denied, due to lack of funds.

On Monday June 17th we received a telephone call from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare asking if we were still interested in conducting the program. We replied in the affirmative.

On Friday June 21st we received a telephone call from Depa rtment of Health, Education and Welfare giving oral approval for the program.

The chain of events outlined above resulted in procedural changes in certain aspects of our program.

Since we hired all of our camp workers in early spring, we hired personnel on the basis we would have no SWEAT program because of lack of funds.

Our pay scale for campworkers did not conform to the scale submitted in our applicat ion -- it was somewhat higher because we hired older personnel.

During the week of June 17 - 21 we screened all of our applications to meet the requireme nts, as to experience, set forth in our November 1967 proposal.

The result was: Twenty young persons were trained in the program, rather than the thirty-six as outlined in our proposal. It is felt we were more successful with these twenty than we wo uld have been with the thirty-six. We were dealing with a more mature group. Specifics are outlined below.

Another aspect that should be covered in this preface is: our system of evaluation differed this year when compared to the two previous years.

In past years evaluation was conducted by Florida State University. Due to the late acceptance of our proposal and the need to develop our own evaluation, rapidly; a simple, yet effective, evaluation was conceived. Specifics are outlined below.

A third change in the program, as proposed, was the amount of time spent in the experience. Our original proposal was for a seven week period. This, in reality, was lengthened to an eleven week period; one week was devoted to training; eight weeks working with the retarded and two weeks working with multiple handicapped adults (again we were committed to certain personnel by the week of June 17 - 21. We had to choose inexperienced personnel for SWEAT -- the ones chosen had agreed to work the full summer term.)

Participants

Background of the twenty participants was varied. They were more mature than originally anticipated, yet all were inexperienced working with the retarded.

One girl was nineteen years of age; with two years nursing school; no experience with the retarded; no recreation experience.

Three boys, age 19, were graduating high school seniors. They were outstanding football players intending to make coaching a career; no recreation experience; no experience with the handicapped.

One boy age 19, was a graduating high school senior with a small amount of volunteer experience with handicapped; no recreation experience.

One boy age 20, was a sophomore in college; an outstanding football player; born in Italy; intending to make coaching his career; no experience with the handicapped; no recreation experience.

Two boys, ago 20 were sophomores in college; music majors; members of national honor society; no experience with the handicapped; no recreation experience.

One boys age 18, freshman in college; limited recreation experience; no experience with handicapped; intending to make teaching a career.

Five boys, age 16, no recreation experience, no experience working with the handicapped; no choice of career.

One girl, age 18, freshman in college; born and educated in India; no recreation experience; no experience with handicapped.

One girl, age 18, freshman in college; no recreation experience; no experience with the handicapped.

One girl, age 17, senior in high school; limited recreation experience; no experience with the handicapped.

One girl, age 18, graduating high school senior; limited recreation experience; no experience with the handicapped.

One girl, age 19, sophomore in college; limited experience in recreation; limited experience with the handicapped.

One girl, age 19, freshman in college; limited recreation experience; no experience with the handicapped.

Procedure

During the week of June 24 - 28, the following training was conducted:

I Monday June 24

a. I. P. Brackett, Chairman Speech Pathology and Audiology lectured for one and one-half hours on "Communication problems of the handicapped;"

b. Charles E. McIntyre, S. I. U. Rehabilitation Institute lectured for one and one-half hours on "Essentials of a Helping Relationship;"

c. Thomas M. Shea, S. I. U. Special Education Department lectured for one and one-half hour on "Social - Emotional Problems of the Handicapped;"

d. William H. Freeburg, Recreation Department, lectured for one and one-half hours on "Recreation for Special Populations."

II Tuesday, June 25th through Friday June 28th.

a. The camp workers were divided into four groups for seminars.

b. Seminars were conducted by staff members from the departments of Speech Pathology and Audiology; Special Education; Rehabilitation Institute; and Recreation.

c. Seminars were conducted from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM each morning. Thus, every camp worker participated in four seminars on four different days.

d. The remainder of the day was devoted to teaching recreation skills, needed with handicapped, in the specialized areas of small-craft, beach, arts-crafts, horses, animals, over-nights, games, campcraft, physical fitness and music.

e. On Friday June 28th the first evaluation questionnaire was distributed. It was composed of five questions as follows:

"With reference to the four lectures given by Mr. Brackett, Mr. Shea, Mr. McIntyre and Mr. Freeburg, respond to the following:

A. What kind of speech or communications problems do you anticipate with the children that will be assigned to you?

B. What kind of Social-Emotional problems do you anticipate with the children that will be assigned to you?

C. List four techniques you plan to use to discipline your children this summer.

E. How will your present approach to recreation activities have to be modified to be helpful to your campers?"

Each question was to be answered in one paragraph, or less.

The purpose of this questionnaire was to determine the attitude of the camp worker, prior to his first introduction to the children. More questionnaires were distributed as outlined below.

Two more questionnaires were distributed during the summer - one midway through the program; one near the end of the program.

It should be noted that the questions were the same except for the tense used in sentence structure. Past tense was used instead of future tense as presented in the first questionnaire. By this procedure, it was hoped we could ascertain individual growth of the camp worker; the attitude of the camp worker toward his job; the degree of seriousness with which the camp worker worked with the children.

The questions were as follows:

"With reference to the four lectures given by Mr. Brackett, Mr. Shea, Mr. McIntyre and Mr. Freeburg, respond to the following:

'A. What kind of speech or communications problems have you encountered with the children assigned to you?

B. What kind of Social-Emotional problems have you encountered with the children assigned to you?

C. Which of your characteristics had to be modified to adjust to the children assigned to you?

D. List four techniques you used to discipline your children this summer?

E. How was your approach to recreation activities modified to help your campers?"

It should be pointed out that all camp workers answered each questionnaire -- those participating in the SWEAT and those not participating in the program. In this way, the SWEAT campworkers would not get the feeling of being a "special" population in the recreation program.

Needless to say, results obtained from the questionnaires varied widely: Some camp workers, obviously, matured during the summer; others obviously, were only working at a summer job; a few showed surprising growth during the summer.

An analysis of the questionnaires; observations from staff; and general comments regarding the SWEAT participants follows.

Individual Evaluation

Following is an evaluation of high school and college students who participated in the SWEAT Program at SIU Little Giant Outdoor Laboratory the summer of 1968.

The evaluation is based on the following criteria: a questionnaire as related to subject matter presented in camp worker training, which was designed also for self-evaluation and was presented at three equally spaced intervals during the summer.

Since Florida State University did not participate in this years evaluation, the students were not tested on theory and techniques on an individual basis.

The staff was in daily contact with each student for observation of their work, to discuss their problems, and to get an idea of their accomplishments and feeling toward their work.

Rebecca Boehm came into the program as a mature individual with a keen sense of responsibility and feeling for her work with people. She was patient and considerate of individuals with a desire to provide the best possible service. Since she only submitted one of the questionnaires, there is no comparison factor in writing pertaining to growth, self-evaluation, or accumlated knowledge. She did write a summary of the camp nurse's job which included guide lines, supplies, contacts, routines, and procedures to follow. This should be considered as excellent for personal growth. She also plans to discuss the program with the director of the school of nursing she attends to possibly make arrangements for students to work at the Outdoor Laboratory in the summer because of her experience.

As an indication of her experience, following is a quote from a letter she wrote after camp was over this summer: "This past summer has been an experience that has had a real effect on my life. Little Grassy camps have the potential and the opportunity to effect so many lives in so many ways. This summer I saw children 'grow' in ways that would be impossible anywhere else. The camp can't do it alone; it takes a staff that really cares and is willing to work and pool all their energies and ideas into making the camp the very best possible. I hope that this feeling continues to develop and grow and Grassy will continue to be a camp for 'Little Giants'."

It is apparent by personal observation that by working with mentally retarded campers and other fellow workers, the knowledge obtained aided in her making a decision to possibly work with special populations.

Bonnie Bucksey came into the program with preconceived notions as to what should be and how it was done. This is evident both from the answers on the questionnaire, by personal observation and by her own self-evaluation. Fortunately she was able to find this out for herself and it is certain she will choose a field of work other than special population.

Robert Cartwright came into the program with dedication and interest in a career in special education. The introduction went well, but as he became more involved with special problems, the dedication and desire seemed to wane. The questionnaire and self-evaluation are some what gray as far as proof, but from personal observation and discussion, it appears that he may choose a field of work other than Special Education.

George Davis came into the program with an anticipated problem of communication and understanding verbally, but with confidence in his ability to work with children. This was borne out by the questionnaire and personal observation. As he became more involved in working with the campers the anticipated problem of verbal communication and understanding were no more than the same anticipation as would occur in any new or unknown situation. He did an excellent job, stayed on it longer than he contracted for and plans to come back next summer.

Deborah Gasaway came into the program because she was in a program of the Outdoor Laboratory prior to summer camp and was impressed by camp workers she met in the program. Her questionnaire answers were practically the same for each one. There was some indication from personal observation which varied from the questionnaire in that it appeared she was more impressed than she had indicated. Her experience probably will aid her very much in choosing a field of study or work.

Michael Graper came into the program recommended by a friend. He didn't fill out the questionnaire, but from personal observation and disucssion he fit into the program very well and had a good relationship with his campers and peers. He did a fine job.

Anthony Grippa came into the program as a reference from the Athletic Deparment because of his ability to work with children. The questionnaire indicated he was well aware of what to do and this was proven also by personal observation and numerous disscussions. Since this was his first time in working with the mentally retarded, he did an excellent job. He would do well in this field of work particularly in the recreation phase of it.

Edmund House came into the program recommended by a fellow camp worker. The questionnaire seems to indicate he accepted the campers as if they were aware of their problems, as a consequence he became very involved in how to best work with them. Since he came from a free choice type environment, working with these children became quite a problem. From personal observation and discussion it appeared he had the desire, but had a hard time relating it to the situation at hand.

Robert Hughes came into the program recommended from the Athletic Department for his ability to work with children. Since he only filled out one questionnaire, there was no basis for comparison. From personal observation and discussion, he related very well with the children and indicated a high interest in their welfare. He did a very good job.

Stephen Iubelt came into the program recommended by a friend. In comparing answers from the questionnaire, he became aware of the work very quickly once he got involved with the campers. From personal observation as indicated in the questionnaire, this seemed the thing to do so it was done.

Susan Koesterer came into the program with a keen desire and dedication for working with children. The questionnaire indicates a real concern for the individual and his right for a good time and association with a camp worker who will consider him first. From personal observation there was understanding and rapport between her and the campers. She has indicated she plans to come back next year and will probably teach in the field of special education.

Randal Lawrence came into the program with a dedication to pay back for some help he had received as a youngster. This questionnaire indicated a great deal of protection for saving the camper from embarrassment from their handicap. From personal observation he adjusted to the overprotection phase and began accepting the camper as he was a part of the program. In fact, there were times when he should have been more involved in seeing that the camper was more a part of the program. It appeared he might have run out of gas.

Brian Newlands came into the program recommended by the Athletic Department for his ability to work with children. The questionnaire indicated that the camper should be able to have as good an experience as he can possibly have with concern for the individual to get along in the group. From personal observation this did happen. He did a very good job of getting his campers involved individually as well as with the group. He has indicated he plans to be back next summer.

Jamie Perry came into the program recommended by a friend. The questionnaire shows real feeling and knowledge for working with the handicapped. This is indicated from personal observations and discussion. She plans to come back next summer and to study and work in special education.

Roli Raje came into the program with the idea that this was a necessary experience for her to have. The questionnaire indicated very good knowledge of the problems and what was necessary to try to solve them. From personal observation she showed very much what she had indicated on the questionnaire. There were times it appeared that some individuals were given attention at the expense of the others.

Matthew Rendleman came into the program to work for the summer. The questionnaire indicated accumulated knowledge of the campers and how to work with them. In observing him, he made sure the campers were accounted for and doing what they were supposed to do. He didn't appear to have any problems, enjoyed his job and did it well.

Michael Thomas came into the program recommended by a friend. Since he only filled out one questionnaire there is no comparison between them. In the one he did fill out he made comment that the campers were less fearful of ridicule from their peers after they had been here a while. From personal observation and disscussion he got his campers involved. He did have a problem with not having time to himself but it didn't show or effect his work. He did a good job.

Karen Tottleben came into the program to gain experience working with special populations. Her questionnaire indicated a much greater understanding of her campers once she was involved with them. She also integrated individuals into the group situation very well. In observing and discussing the campers and program with her, she maintained good rapport and was enthusiastic about her job. In her personal evaluation she stated: "I thoroughly enjoyed my summer at Grassy, but even more important I enjoyed my job." In another quote she said: "I think I grew up over the summer and learned the meaning of responsibility." This is an indication of her personal growth. She will be working in winter camp and again next summer and probably will go into special education.

David Whitacre came into the program because he lives nearby and was familiar with the facility. He expressed himself very well on the questionnaire in indicating a very mature and understanding attitude. This also was a conclusion from personal observation and discussion. He attended to his campers and the job very well. He has a keen interest in outdoor activity as an individual which probably aided in making the adjustments necessary for a good camp worker.

From general observation it appeared that a number of the camp workers accumulated their efforts in filling out the questionnaire; a couple of them evidently have good recall because their questionnaires had the same answers each time.

It appears also that a number of them answered the questionnaire as if it were a test and as a consequence fed information they felt was acceptable. A few evidently were not convinced of the validity or value of it -- therefore made little, or in one case, no effort to fill it out.

In addition to the above observations there are also these: The questionnaire did make the camp worker think about what he was doing. In most cases he found out, and as a consequence, the camper and camp worker both had a better experience.

Summary

In summary, the following observations should be made.

Due to the last minute notification as outlined in the "Preface," the more mature camp workers employed, and the rapid preparation of the evaluation procedure; it is felt the SWEAT program for 1968 was successful.

One thing is certain: most of the participants have personal knowledge of the problems involved in working with special populations.

As set forth in the section on "Individual Evaluation," it is felt that at least six persons will ultimately choose special education, as a related field, as a career; at least five persons will definitely not choose special education as a career; the remaining nine persons will be valuable assets in volunteer work with retarded in local communities -- even though they do not choose special education for a career.